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COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS
Thirty-eighth session
Vienna, 14-23 March 1995
Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION AND FUTURE WORK

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present document contains a note on the reconvened thirty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the draft provisional agenda for its thirty-ninth session and the documentation required, an overview of forthcoming meetings of its subsidiary bodies, a summary of recommendations made with respect to adequacy of documentation submitted to the Commission and a proposal that it consider national drug control plans. The Commission may wish to give new or additional policy directives to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, particularly with respect to paragraphs 2, 4, 19 and 28 to 31.

*E/CN.7/1995/1.

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I. RECONVENED THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

1. In accordance with the procedure described in paragraph 8 of Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 13 (XXXVI) of 7 April 1993, a reconvened session of the Commission will be held in December 1995. At the reconvened session, the Commission is expected to approve the initial programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and the second and final revision of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

2. The Commission may wish to recommend to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

DRAFT DECISION ...

Reconvened session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

At its ... plenary meeting, on ... 1995, the Economic and Social Council decided that a reconvened session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should take place in December 1995 to approve the initial programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and the second and final revision of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

II. PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

3. In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat submits to the Commission the following draft provisional agenda for its thirty-ninth session, together with an indication of the documents for its consideration in respect of each item.

Provisional agenda and documentation

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

   Documentation

   Annotated provisional agenda

3. General debate and policy directives.

   [Possible core issue or issues to be determined if the Commission so wishes]

   Documentation

   Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the Programme

4. Reduction of illicit demand for drugs.

[Special issues to be identified by the Commission]

Documentation

Report of the Secretariat on the world situation on drug abuse

5. Illicit drug traffic and supply, including reports from the subsidiary bodies.

Documentation

Report of the Secretariat on illicit drug trafficking
Reports from subsidiary bodies

6. Implementation of the international drug control treaties.

(a) Changes in the scope of control of substances;

Documentation

Report of the Executive Director (as necessary)

(b) International Narcotics Control Board;

Documentation

Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1995
Report of the International Narcotics Control Board on article 12 of the 1988 Convention

(c) Other matters arising under the international drug control conventions.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat (as necessary)

7. Monitoring of the implementation of the Global Programme of Action and the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control.

Documentation

Report of the Secretariat on the System-Wide Action Plan
Report of the Secretary-General on the Global Programme of Action

8. Administrative and budgetary matters.

Documentation

Note by the Executive Director

9. Provisional agenda for the fortieth session of the Commission and future work.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat

10. Other matters.

Documentation

(As necessary)

11. Adoption of the report of the Commission at its thirty-ninth session.

Action required by the Commission

4. The provisional agenda requires the prior approval of the Commission before being submitted to the Council. The draft provisional agenda submitted for consideration and approval by the Commission reflects the proposal that the general debate should provide an opportunity for giving policy guidance and directives to UNDCP, and that the formulation of such directives could be facilitated by focusing the general debate on one or more core issues.

III. FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES

5. Tables 1 and 2 list the meetings of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) and the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East that have been tentatively scheduled for 1995 and 1996, based on offers from potential host Governments.

Table 1. Meetings of the subsidiary bodies in 1995

Title of meeting	Date	Venue
HONLEA, Africa	September/October 1995	Kampala
HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific	Third or fourth quarter	Indonesia
HONLEA, Europe	30 January-3 February 1995	Vienna
HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean	Fourth quarter	Havana
Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East	Second quarter	Amman[a/]

[a/]Headquarters (or temporary headquarters) of regional economic commissions where meetings are held in the absence of an invitation from a Government of the region.

Table 2. Meetings of the subsidiary bodies in 1996

Title of meeting	Date	Venue
HONLEA, Africa	To be determined	Egypt
HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific	To be determined	Philippines
HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean	To be determined	Santiago[a]
Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East	To be determined	Amman[a]

[a] Headquarters (or temporary headquarters) of regional economic commissions where meetings are held in the absence of an invitation from a Government of the region.

Action required by the Commission

6. No specific action is required concerning the venue of meetings of the subsidiary bodies unless there are conflicting offers that have not been resolved.

IV. POLICY GUIDANCE ON DOCUMENTATION

A. Background

7. In early 1994, an independent evaluation of the reporting obligations of UNDCP to the Commission was undertaken on behalf of UNDCP. The evaluation was based primarily, but not exclusively, on documentation issued by UNDCP for the thirty-sixth session of the Commission, held from 29 March to 7 April 1993.

8. Recommendations of the evaluator for implementation by UNDCP pointed to a number of changes required in order to improve the format and contents of the documents, to ensure their timely preparation and distribution, to reduce the volume of documentation, and to strengthen interaction between UNDCP and the Commission on the establishment of documentation requirements. Those recommendations were approved by the Executive Director and are being implemented by UNDCP.

9. The evaluation report also contained a number of recommendations that the Commission itself may wish to take into account in order to further improve the format and content of the documentation and to reduce its volume. Those recommendations are summarized below.

B. Summary of recommendations addressed to the Commission

10. The Commission could greatly assist the Secretariat by commenting not only on the substance or contents of a document but also on its format.

11. When requesting UNDCP to submit reports, the Commission should make it clear exactly what information it wants and for what purpose. A vaguely worded resolution may give insufficient guidance to UNDCP, since it may be open to a variety of interpretations.

12. The Commission may wish to review the relevant sections of the series of General Assembly and Council resolutions pertaining to the limitation and control of documentation. The purpose of such a review would be twofold: to relieve UNDCP of some of its heavy reporting obligations, and to achieve economies.* Specifically, the Commission is called upon:

(a) To review periodically (for example, every five years) its documentation requirements to determine which, if any, have become redundant;

(b) To keep its request for documents to the minimum compatible with the efficient conduct of its work;

(c) To keep reports on its sessions as brief as possible.

13. In reviewing its documentation requirements, the Commission may wish to distinguish between information that is desired and needed on a regular basis by Governments and information that is directly relevant to the policy-making function of the Commission. The Commission could request the Executive Director to disseminate the former regularly to Governments, but not as official documents of the Commission.

14. At its thirty-sixth session, the Commission, in the nine draft resolutions forwarded to the Council for adoption and in its own 13 resolutions, called for a total of 11 reports. The Commission may wish to examine whether any of those reports could have been disseminated directly to Governments. In that regard, it might be useful if the Commission were to consider requesting its expanded bureau to examine all draft resolutions that call for reports, to determine whether some of them might be more usefully disseminated directly to Governments. If so, the wording of relevant parts of resolutions might be changed to read as follows: "Requests the Executive Director to report to Governments ... ."

15. In exercising its monitoring responsibilities, the Commission may wish to consider requesting the Executive Director to ensure that reports synthesize and analyse information received, and, where possible, present trends, without reproducing the information in extenso. The full information should nevertheless be available to Governments upon request.

16. When requesting reports from the Executive Director, the Commission could reduce the documentation by permitting the Executive Director or his representatives to report orally to the Commission, although whether that would be appropriate or not may depend upon the nature of the subject matter.

17. The text of resolutions adopted by the Commission or forwarded to the Council at its thirty-sixth session amounted to some 31 pages of text. Of those 31 pages, 14 (nearly one half) were devoted to preambular paragraphs. While the importance of preambular paragraphs in resolutions is not in question, the Commission may wish to reduce the amount of preambular material in its resolutions.

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*In mid-1993, the cost of processing a single page of documentation in the six official languages of the United Nations was estimated at US$ 715.

18. The Commission may wish to re-examine the method and process of drafting its report with a view to reducing its volume, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 36/117 of 10 December 1981, 37/14 of 16 November 1982, and 43/222 of 21 December 1989, which address the question of limitation of documentation and establish a desirable limit of 32 pages for the reports of its intergovernmental bodies. The reports of the Commission have recently been seldom less than 100 pages.

C. Action by the Commission

19. The Commission is requested to review the recommendations made, and may wish to entrust a detailed examination of the matter to the Committee of the Whole.

V. CONSIDERATION OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL PLANS BY THE COMMISSION

20. There is a clear consensus among member States that the problems of illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse call for coordinated and balanced policies at national level. That in turn necessitates careful and thorough planning by the competent authorities.

21. A growing number of Governments, in both developed and developing countries, have prepared national drug control plans. At least 20 countries have adopted national drug control plans and some 25 others are in the process of drafting them.

22. To facilitate coordinated planning in drug control, UNDCP has developed and promoted the concept of national drug control plans, referred to as master plans. Such plans may bear different names in different countries, but they have certain basic characteristics in common. In general terms, a national drug control plan can be defined as the single document adopted by a Government outlining all national concerns in drug control, summarizing policies, defining priorities and assigning responsibilities for drug control efforts.

23. UNDCP has provided assistance in preparing national plans in a number of countries. In view of the growing interest in the idea, UNDCP has published a model format, accompanied by a set of guidelines for use in preparing national drug control plans.

24. The very process of drawing up a national plan has considerable value as a means of promoting concrete coordination in the drug control policy and activities of a country. It can be the starting-point for developing permanent coordinating machinery at the country level. In addition, it can provide the basis for a Government to assess whether or not measures taken have achieved their intended results.

25. At the international level, the national drug control plan can serve as a useful tool for the comparison of strategies, and can provide a basis on which to coordinate efforts at subregional, regional and global levels. That can be especially useful in drawing attention to the need for country-to-country cooperation, particularly within the context of subregional strategies.

26. The Commission may thus wish to devote greater attention to national master plans. In that connection, it may be noted that the Commission bears explicit responsibility for the monitoring of efforts by Governments to implement the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session on 23 February 1990,[1] as reflected in Assembly resolutions 45/148 of 18 December 1990, 46/102 of 16 December 1991 and 47/100 of 16 December 1992. In fact, all three resolutions contain almost identical wording, calling on the Commission "to promote and continuously monitor the implementation of the Global Programme of

Action". As national drug control plans represent a consolidated statement of the actions individual Governments are taking, they can be of considerable use as a means of monitoring what is being done in furtherance of the Global Programme of Action. While Governments at times make reference to their national plans in their statements during the general debate, such statements do not offer the opportunity to present them adequately, nor do they permit the Commission to consider them and to benefit from the plans elaborated and the experience acquired by national authorities.

27. Indeed, the ad hoc intergovernmental advisory group created as a result of Commission resolution 3 (XXXVII) of 21 April 1994 took up the question and recommended in its report that in order to foster the exchange of experiences and to enable the Commission to have up-to-date information, States should be encouraged to submit their national drug control plans (master plans) for consideration either by the Commission itself or by a working group established for that purpose.

28. As a first step towards the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendation, the Commission may therefore wish to include in the agenda for its thirty-ninth session a specific item under which national drug control plans could be considered. Given the time that will be required for the item, it may be preferable to entrust it to the Committee of the Whole. Based on the experience at the thirty-ninth session, the Commission could determine which option it would like to adopt for subsequent sessions, including the possibility of a working group as mentioned by the ad hoc intergovernmental advisory group.

29. In order to permit the degree of depth needed for fruitful consideration of national plans, the Commission may prefer to focus its attention on a small number of cases, at least initially. The consideration of one master plan per region would require an estimated two working days. Governments could volunteer to submit their plans. In order to permit the circulation as conference room papers of at least the executive summaries of the plans to be considered, the selection of countries should if possible be made well before the session of the Commission.

30. It would be helpful if each plan could be introduced at the meeting by a representative of the Government concerned, who should be from the drug control coordinating body or from another such institution bearing responsibility for the implementation of the plan. A question and answer session would follow, allowing members of the Committee of the Whole to seek further information and make observations on the plan in the light of the expert knowledge they possess.

31. Review by the Commission would not be meant to require Governments to amend their national plans, but rather to foster the exchange of experience and to enable the Commission to have up-to-date information.

Notes

[1]Resolution S-17/2, annex.